From Conflict Protraction to Peace Actualization in Palestinian-Israeli Relations

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This article makes the case for harmonizing top-down peacemaking and bottom-up peace building in order to create and sustain a culture of peace. The analysis, focused on Palestinian-Israeli relations, finds the answer in the convergence of middle-line peacemakers and peace builders in "a center of peace actualization." Such a safe space would allow for a shared concept of history, moderate action, and collaborative work on behalf of coexistence and social justice. Implied is the need for peacemakers and peace builders to become involved in each other's domain and for all concerned to support middle-line peacemakers and peace builders as they advance peace. Such a concern is especially important and pertinent in our post-9/11 world as the problems associated with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict persist and as the search for new ways for building a lasting peace in the Middle East continues.

Keywords: bottom-up peacebuilding, coexistence, Middle East, Palestinian-Israeli relations, social justice, top-down peacemaking

Author Bio(s)

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Introduction

The struggle between the Palestinians and Israel has resulted in “a war without end” (La Guardia, 2003) and a “missing peace” (Ross, 2004). It is also viewed as poisoning Western relations in the world. As La Guardia (2003, p. 400) writes:

As the September 11 terrorist attacks in America show, the Middle East is not just a distant place that can be safely left to its own devices. Anybody with a grudge against America, against the West, or against pro-western regimes can seize the issue of Palestine to rally enraged supporters. To resolve the agony of Palestine would be a major victory of the “war against terrorism.

Among the reasons that prolong the Palestinian-Israeli struggle is the inability of the contending parties to learn from the past, particularly harmonizing peacemaking with peace building. These are both necessary for the successful resolution of protracted conflicts and the creation of a genuine and sustainable culture of peace. The former, mainly occurring top down, and the latter, mainly occurring bottom up, have historically operated in separate spheres.

The assumption of and need for synergy or even integration between peacemaking and peace building are based on research indicating that peacemaking does not necessarily lead to agreement has. For example, in South Africa (Galtung 1996) and Israeli relations (Ross 2000), other parties involved in the protracted conflict persist and as the search for new ways for building a lasting peace in the Middle East continues.
The analysis, convergence of actualization. The need of peacemakers and peace builders as they exist in our post-conflict persist the Middle East. There have been multiple attempts and scenarios to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but the road has been rocky at best. While some believe there is a move away from exclusivist toward more accommodationist policies, the Palestinians and Israelis continue to hold varying definitions of peace, informed largely by the power asymmetry between them (Sharoni and Abu-Nimer 2000, p. 105) and made more complicated by competing local, regional, and international interests. If the Palestinians (and other Arabs) and Israel are to accommodate each other, they must do so from a common understanding of peace, and not only at the formal governmental levels, but also in informal non-governmental contexts. If extremists and radicals and if divergent opinions and contradictions within each national community have stood in the way of peace, the lack of harmonization between peacemakers at the highest levels and peace builders at the grassroots levels can also explain the lack of peace progress. Hence, peacemaking and peace building must be orchestrated, preferably in a safe domain of peace actualization.

In this article, I advocate for the creation of peace beyond brokering a ceasefire and implementing negotiated peace agreements. I present a way to join both peacemaking and peace building in order to advance and sustain peace. My analysis, situated within Palestinian-Israeli relations, is conducted by first making theoretical distinctions between peacemakers and peace builders and their respective divisions. Second, the need to develop what I term “peace actualizers” or “peace actualization,” essential for creating a genuine and sustainable culture of peace, is explored. Policy implications for resolving the protracted Palestinian-Israeli conflict conclude the article.

I. Peacemakers versus Peace Builders

A starting point is to distinguish between peacemakers and peace builders (Galtung 1996, p. 271; Maoz 2004, pp. 564-565). It is also to determine the extent to which each group embodies hard-line or soft-line traits, or a combination thereof. While both peacemakers and peace builders work essentially within the same general milieu, each group follows a different set of values and modus operandi, based on interest and ideological predilections, policy parameters or principles, power positions, locus of activities, and reservoirs of resources. These differences result not only in a natural dichotomy, but also an unnatural lack of balance and synergy between them.

Peacemakers include government decision-makers and their staffs, usually military experts, economists, and strategic planners. Peace builders have among
their ranks heads and members of non-governmental organizations (for example, research, human rights, and activist) like academicians, artists, doctors, environmentalists, health professionals, and journalists. Both groups are interrelated and can either extend or withhold support from each other. While acknowledging that peacemakers can draw on direct instruments of power and coercion, peace builders can appeal to the hearts and minds of members through vision, a system of common beliefs, and actions.

Peacemakers focus mostly on conflict and initial stages of post-conflict periods and engage in diplomacy and summity, sometimes with the involvement of a third party or go-betweeners (Fisher 1983; McDonald and Bendahmane 1987). While the ultimate goal is to end a given crisis or conflict, the near-term objective is to improve communication, change perceptions, and rehumanize the image of the enemy (Burton, 1969; Rothman, 1992). However, in navigating the process of settlement and developing trust and understanding, their work remains insufficiently concerned with “the deeper structural, cultural, and long-term relational aspects of conflict” (Lederach 1995, p. 201). Peace builders’ attention spans the conflict-peace cycles and their actions are directed toward peace promotion. Peacemakers mainly work to manage or terminate existing hostilities in order to create military stability and political normalcy, essential for economic viability, social cohesion, and stable foreign relations. They have a national audience but, simultaneously, are beholden to their supporters or voters. They are overly and overtly concerned about short-term policies and outcomes. Peace builders go beyond the obvious, not only to accomplish most of the above, but also to solve existing and prevent potential conflicts. They are issue-oriented; build bridges and networks; and emphasize dialogue and peace, joint community initiatives, socioeconomic development, and integrated education (Lederach 1997). Connected to specific communities, their determination is to intentionally address long-term relationships and processes. Their ultimate goal is to bring about social justice.

The way peacemakers, in their multiple divisions, manage conflict is akin to what Fisher and Ury convincingly argue in Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In (1981). People see two ways to negotiate: hard or soft. Hard negotiators view life as a contest of wills in which the winner is the one who holds strong positions and is able to outlast his opponents. Wanting to avoid personal conflict, soft negotiators readily concede in order to reach agreement. Yet they usually feel exploited and bitter. The middle-liners combine both the hard and soft strategies and negotiate from a principled approach. As Fisher and Ury (1981, p. xviii) write:

It is to decide issues on their merits rather than through a haggling process focused on what each side says it will and won’t do. It suggests that you look for mutual gains whenever possible, and that where your interests conflict, you should insist that the result be based on some fair standards independent of the will of either side.... It enables you to be fair while protecting you against those who would take advantage of your fairness.
While peacemakers and peace builders differ, each group embodies basic divisions within itself as well, emanating principally from psychological traits and policy preferences. In this regard, important questions include: In whose interest are peacemakers and peace builders acting? How do their divisions extend or end conflict protraction? How do they accommodate their opponents or enemies? What approaches do they follow to achieve their goals? What is their ultimate goal for peace?

II. A. Peacemakers: Hard-liners, Soft-liners, and Middle-liners

Critical national decisions are normally made by a handful of key political and military leaders, usually in consultation with their advisors and important constituencies. Peace builders influence such decisions to the extent they speak for powerful forces in civil society and have access to the decision-making process. While internal, regional, and global affairs impact each decision, it is the leader’s or the peacemaker’s personal traits and preferences that ultimately determine the structure, process, and content of the decision. Personal traits and manifest political behaviors are closely interrelated. Those predisposed toward conciliation are more inclined to resolve conflict than others who embody aggressive tendencies.

Snyder and Diesing (1977, pp. 297-310) distinguished between what they term “hard-liners” and soft-liners” in terms of psychological traits. Leaders they call hard-liners display limited empathy toward their counterparts in adversary nations. In the hard liners’ view, adversary leaders will submit as a consequence of firmness, not coercion. Moreover, they view conciliation as a weakness and press for further concessions rather than accept concessions as accommodation efforts made in good faith. Hard-liners’ limited empathy makes them perceive nations as being engaged in a virtually unlimited Hobbesian pursuit of power (Table A).
**PEACEMAKERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HARDLINERS</th>
<th>PEACE BUILDERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display limited empathy toward counterparts in adversary nations</td>
<td>Proactive to influence public agenda in both states for benefit of own people or cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adversary leaders submit as a consequence of firmness</td>
<td>Hold partisan perceptions of peace and peace building and mobilize constituencies accordingly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View conciliation as a weakness and press for concessions</td>
<td>Equality, parity, and symmetry sought to serve own interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceive nations as engaged in an unlimited pursuit of power</td>
<td>Prefer retributive over distributive justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MIDDLINERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENSITIVE BOTH TO THE SECURITY DILEMMA AND TO POWER AND RESOLVE FACTORS</th>
<th>INFLUENCE PUBLIC AGENDA FOR PEACE ON BOTH SIDES OF DIVIDE FOR THE COMMON BENEFIT OF BOTH PEOPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspicious about opponent’s aggressive tendencies but sees legitimacy in his demands</td>
<td>Firm in demanding distributive justice and its equitable application on both sides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Move cautiously toward detente but without yielding any vital interests</td>
<td>Promote and uphold independence from parochial or political interests of either side</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize existence of unavoidable conflict but willing to define self-interest in minimal terms in order to minimize conflict</td>
<td>Emphasize shared interests and insist on equality, parity, and symmetry to sustain benefits</td>
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**SOFTLINERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMPATHIZE WITH ADVERSARY NATIONS AND STRESS THE ADVERSARIES’ COST IN BACKING DOWN</th>
<th>WORK BUT NOT PURPOSEFULLY TO INFLUENCE THE PUBLIC AGENDA FOR PEACE ON BOTH SIDES OF DIVIDE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing to decouple consequences of immediate conflict from potential conflicts</td>
<td>Interested in peace building initiatives but wish these would eventually further mutual benefit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coercion answered by coercion but conciliatory gestures generate mutual efforts to compromise</td>
<td>Equality, parity, and symmetry between them and opponents are not prerequisite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts exist among nations but might be exaggerated by mutual misperception</td>
<td>Prefer distributive to retributive justice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOFTLINERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMBINE POSITIONAL AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP QUALITIES</th>
<th>HAVE A “CONFLICT PARTNERSHIP APPROACH,” BASED ON REALISTIC PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Embody vision and strategy for peace</td>
<td>Shun and go beyond violence to end dehumanization and oppression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Embrace shared concept of history, moderate action, and collaborative work</td>
<td>Initiate and sustain education for coexistence and peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advance a “conflict partnership approach,” based on realistic principles of behavior and communication</td>
<td>Proactive in reforming administrative, educational, economic, financial, and/or legal infrastructures in support of empowerment and democracy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By compromising, the adversaries will be answer to the question of whether to use hard-liners or soft-liners fear to make the decision. Not all middle-liners can make the decision and show a willingness to accommodate the other side. Diesing (1977, p. 47) illustrated the decision continuum style and how it can be used to make decisions and show a willingness to accommodate the other side. Moreo
By contrast, soft-liners empathize more with adversary nations and stress the adversaries' cost in backing down. Generally, they are willing to decouple the consequence of the immediate conflict from potential conflicts. For them, coercion will be answered by coercion but conciliatory gestures will generate mutual efforts to compromise. Although they acknowledge that conflicts exist among nations, soft-liners fear that such conflicts might be exaggerated by mutual misperception.

Not all leaders can be neatly placed in a hard- or soft-line mold. Decision-making style or strategy preference is not dichotomous; instead, it forms a continuum along which moderates or middle-liners may also operate. Snyder and Diesing (1977, p. 309) characterize a middle-liner as one who is:

- sensitive both to the security dilemma and to power and resolve factors...has some suspicions about the opponent’s aggressive tendencies but also sees some legitimacy in his demands; is willing to move cautiously toward détente but without yielding any vital interests in the process; recognizes the existence of unavoidable conflict but is willing to define self-interest in minimal terms so that conflict can be minimized.

Moreover, given certain conditions, leaders sometimes modify their traits and show a willingness to shift their orientations. Some leaders who are aggressive may acquiesce because of failure in a conflict situation, while others who are accommodating will escalate the conflict either to placate their constituency or to give the impression of steadfastness. Hard-liners can become middle-liners, as illustrated by President Charles de Gaulle’s change of policy toward Algeria in 1962 and President Richard M. Nixon’s visit to China in 1972. Soft-liners can become middle-liners, as illustrated by India’s Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his relationship with China in 1962 and President Bill Clinton in his relationship with Iraq, especially after the American Embassy bombings. However, leaders rarely assume opposite orientations to what they truly are. Few soft-liners become hard-liners (for example, King Hussein’s behavior toward the Palestinians in Jordan in 1970-71 and President Jimmy Carter’s policy toward the Soviet Union following its invasion of Afghanistan in 1979). Fewer hard-liners become soft-liners (for example, President Anwar Sadat’s shift of policy toward Israel, especially his visit to Jerusalem in November 1977 and President Ronald Reagan’s policy toward the Soviet Union in the late 1980s). However, middle-liners can occasionally shift toward hard-line or soft-line positions, as illustrated, respectively, by President John F. Kennedy in his stand toward Cuba and the Soviet Union during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and in his Soviet policy after the crisis.

II. B. Palestinian and Israeli Peacemakers

National leaders on both sides of the Palestinian-Israeli divide are substantially to blame for conflict protraction. It is actually problematic to call some of them peacemakers. They speak of peace but few practice it or are serious about it. These leaders, with the overwhelming majority being males, have historically made decisions based on narrow self- or party interests, zero-sum
games, or a “we versus them” mentality. Once their decisions are carried out, more often than not, the process has taken on a life of its own, diminishing national community goals and neglecting peace-building approaches. Peacemakers have constantly misperceived or actually ignored the other’s goals and interests, both during and after conflict. In emphasizing security or violence, they have failed to realize that such strategies endanger others through insecurity and counter-violence, fueling passions that lead to communal guilt, collective punishment, and revenge rather than due process. The general population has either become proponents of the party line or has dutifully followed, often out of fear, psychological numbing, or national acculturation. Some have chosen to immigrate or go into self-imposed exile. Those able have joined the peace builders’ camps, preferring to engage in the public peace process or in addressing community-based and functional issues. Their motivation is to hasten peace and to set a solid foundation for peace once a peace treaty is signed.

Serious peacemaking initiatives in Arab-Israeli history (of which the Question of Palestine has always been central) and Palestinian-Israeli relations have been few and have occurred at the highest levels. Successes have come when those involved have been willing to move from a hard-line toward a soft-line mindset or from a hard-line or a soft-line toward the middle. Prime examples include Anwar Sadat’s rapprochement with Israel between 1977 and 1981, the Oslo Peace Accords of September 1993, and the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty of October 1994. Failure has occurred when leaders have been reluctant to seize the historic moment and compromise, such as during the Camp David Summit of July 2000.

More specifically, Sadat—a hard-liner as a subordinate to President Gamal Abdel Nasser and as Egypt’s president and main architect of the October 1973 War—became a middle-liner after 1974. He signed two disengagement agreements with Israel in January 1974 and September 1975, respectively, reopened the Suez Canal in June 1975, and proceeded on a path of peace with Israel. He visited Jerusalem in November 1977, agreed on a framework for peace with Israel’s Menachem Begin at Camp David in September 1978, and signed the Israeli-Egyptian Peace Treaty in March 1979, which ultimately caused his assassination in October 1981. Although Sadat considered past history and internal and external conditions—Egypt’s economic difficulties, the failure of Arabism, and prospects of accommodation with the West, particularly the United States—his final decisions were based on his judgment. Even if consultative bodies were included at times, they were not in most cases aware of the facts. According to Heikal, “their discussions [were] thus ineffectual, perfunctory affairs that affect the decision-making process not at all (1978, p. 715).

Similarly, Begin definitely possessed hard-line credentials. An ultranationalist, he commanded the Irgun militia and established Herut in the 1940s. He was steadfast against improving relations with Germany in the early 1950, and was even called “a fascist” by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion. Negotiations with the Arabs were anathema to him, and he captured the elections in May 1977 by vowing never to return one inch of historic Israel to the Arabs. Yet, when the opportunity presented itself, he did not hesitate to deal with the enemy.

As for Oslo, one could argue that the peace process was too weak on one side, the assassinations bro…
opportunity presented itself, he seized it and welcomed Sadat to Israel. Unlike Sadat, however, Begin had greater constraints on his decision-making process. He had to deal with some opposition within his own Likud Party, his coalition partners in government, and Israel’s strict security requirements.

In contrast to Sadat and Begin, Jordan’s King Hussein was a soft liner. He remained reluctant to follow Sadat’s example and independently and publicly negotiate with Israel. Doing so would have put him in Sadat’s camp, making him appear disloyal and jeopardizing his political and physical being. He witnessed his grandfather Abdallah’s assassination by Palestinians at the El-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem in 1951 and he reluctantly joined an Arab military pact that ended losing the June 1967 War to Israel. Where he to indulge in pro-Israel declarations and policies in the 1970s and 1980s—such as affirming Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and the occupied territories’ biblically sanctioned ties to Israel—Arabs would have accused him of losing Jerusalem not only in war but peacefully abandoning it as well. Not until the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords by Israel and the Palestinians was he liberated to do so and reach a peace agreement with its leaders in 1994. Although an authoritarian monarch, he was restrained in his policies by geopolitics and demographics, specifically Jordan’s location between the Arab states and Israel on one hand and ethnic Palestinians making up around 60 percent of Jordan’s population on the other. His conversion from peacemaking to peace building came to full expression just a few short months before his death. In a moving, brief address at the signing ceremony of the Wye River Agreement on October 23, 1998, he stated:

We quarrel, we agree; we are friendly, we are not friendly. But we have no right to dictate through irresponsible action or narrow-mindedness the future of our children and their children’s children. There has been enough destruction. Enough death. Enough waste. And it’s time that, together, we occupy a place beyond ourselves, our peoples, that is worthy of them under the sun, the descendants of the children of Abraham (Laqueur and Rubin, 2001, pp. 534-535).

As for the Oslo Peace Accords, signed at the White House on September 13, 1993, the Palestinian and Israeli leaders at that time represented hard-liners (e.g., Yitzhak Rabin and Yasser Arafat) moving to the middle or soft-liners (for example, Yossi Beilin and Mahmoud Abbas) who were ahead of their respective national communities. Under safe diplomatic conditions in Norway, they were able to compromise and reach agreement. Once home and in the grip of their practical national politics, their voices for peace fell on deaf ears. Either the movement to the middle and the soft-liners’ stand were not serious or the infrastructure of peace—in terms of its sustaining power, internal consolidation, and international linkages—was too weak to accommodate their vision and promises. Moreover, on the Israeli side, the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin in November 1995 and Palestinian extremism brought forth a hardening of popular attitudes and two hard-line or anti-Oslo governments under Benyamin Netanyahlu and Ariel Sharon and in-between,
soft-line government under Ehud Barak. On the Palestinian side, a large segment of Palestinians, mainly followers of the Islamic militant groups of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, became more radicalized given their maximal demands for liberating Palestine, worsening conditions under Israeli occupation, and the lack of the Oslo peace dividend. In the cacophony of extremism and jingoism in both national communities, middle-liners faded away.

Historically, Arab and Israeli peacemakers did not base their important decisions for peace on attitudes and behaviors of peace builders. Arab states actually do not have grassroots peace movements. (In discussing Arab peace activism, Mosaad (2002) finds numerous factors that account for "this mysterious phenomenon." He holds that Arab governments discourage grass-roots initiatives for democratic political change. They actually determine and control peacemaking and peace building. The narrative people hear about the Israelis is that all of them are militant intent on neutralizing the Arab people and expelling them from the land. Peace is resisted because, at both the social and intellectual levels, it is associated "with the stigma of globalization and its Western cultural, economic, and political hegemony." Arab peoples are not hopeful about their political and societal leaders or the future, especially that those who became peace proponents were themselves "corrupt politicians, immoral businessmen, and greedy opportunists." What weakens peace activism in Arab society is the lack of a clear vision for peace and a real discourse for peace. What weakens it also is the Israeli occupation and Palestinian extremism. "In short, Israeli tanks are killing a possible Arab peace camp just as suicide bombers are killing what is still remaining of the Israeli peace camp." Demonstrators are usually opposed to peace with Israel, not supporters of it. Jordan’s King Abdullah’s assassination in July 1951 and Sadat’s assassination in October 1981 express Arab extremism and rejection of peace with Israel. In Israel, the peace movement has a voice but it is split between the centrist Peace Now organization, aligned with political parties for social democracy and civil rights, and the several progressive groups that are often considered extreme by most Israelis. Moreover, the Israeli peace movement is counterbalanced and sometimes overshadowed by rightist political and religious parties and groups, including Likud, Shas, and Gush Emunim.

III. A. Peace Builders: Hard-liners versus Soft-liners versus Middle-Liners

Similar to the Snyder and Diesing characterizations, peace builders embody traits as well. Hard-line peace builders express themselves through proactive work at the individual and group levels to influence the public agenda in both national communities or states for the benefit of their own people or cause. They hold partisan perceptions of peace and peace building, and mobilize their constituencies accordingly. Equality, parity, and symmetry are sought to serve their own interests or are undertaken to meet their "own terms." They prefer retributive over distributive justice or administering punishment for evil deeds over allocating collective goods (Table A).
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Middle-Liners
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Those who possess soft-line tendencies work at the individual and group levels but not purposefully to influence the public agenda for peace on both sides of the divide. They are truly interested in peace building through educational, environmental, health, and similar initiatives, and wish that such efforts would eventually lead to further joint action and mutual benefit. Equality, parity, and symmetry between them and their opponents are not prerequisite. They seek minimal demands from their opponents or promote the "live and let live" attitude, believing that compromise and conciliation will lead to peace with justice. They prefer distributive to retributive justice.

Middle-line peace builders work at the individual and group levels to influence the public agenda for peace on both sides of the divide and for the common benefit of both peoples. They are firm in demanding distributive justice and its equitable application on both sides. Independence from parochial or political interests of either side is promoted and upheld. Being aware of the dynamics of influence and power, they emphasize shared interests and insist on equality, parity, and symmetry between the contending parties in order to sustain beneficial relations. As Kelman (1999, p. 202) observes:

the less powerful party is especially inclined to be afraid of domination and exploitation by the more powerful one, to react to signs of arrogance and paternalism on the other's part, and to be sensitive to any implications that it is being treated as inferior. The more powerful party is confronted with the often contradictory requirement of providing assistance without establishing a pattern of dominance, dependency, and interference in the affairs of the other.

More so than hard liners, soft-line and middle-line peace builders work toward de-escalating transformations (Kriesberg 2003, pp. 190-199). They engage in conflict transformation in order to construct "a new social environment that advances a sense of confidence and improves conditions of life" (Jeong 2000, p. 38).

III. B. Palestinian and Israeli Peace Builders

Palestinian and Israeli peace builders work in radically different environments. While most Palestinians are excluded from public discourse on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, there is a strong presence of peace activism and peace building in Israel. For Palestinians, the Israeli military occupation and reactions to it pose additional obstacles that are destroying civil society, infrastructure, and economy (Roy 2001; 2004). In contrast, Israeli Jews enjoy a democratic structure and process, a healthier civil society, freer mass media, and protected human rights.

Given the above, an example of a hard-line peace-building group in Israel is Women in Black, a loose network of women committed to ending the occupation and to peace with justice. Another group is the Refuseniks who are conscientious objectors, mainly army reserve officers and soldiers who refuse to serve in the
Palestinian occupied territories. A third is Yesh Gvul (“There is a limit!”). As its web site explains, it is “an Israeli peace group campaigning against the occupation by backing soldiers who refuse duties of a repressive or aggressive nature. The brutal role of the Israeli army in subjugating the Palestinian population places numerous servicemen in a grave moral and political dilemma, as they are required to enforce policies they deem illegal, immoral and ultimately harmful to Israeli interests.” MIFTAH, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue & Democracy, is a fourth group. Founded by Hanan Ashrawi and other well-known Palestinian personalities in Jerusalem in 1999, it is committed to “fostering the principles of democracy and effective dialogue based on the free and candid exchange of information and ideas...to ensure democratic practice, the rule of law and respect for human rights.”

Among the soft-line peace-building groups are Beit Adam, a place for cultural exchange and enrichment, “in the spirit of ecological awareness, sharing, and nonviolence.” A second is Friends of the Earth Middle East. Founded in 1994, it is the first organization of leading Egyptian, Jordanian, Israeli, and Palestinian environmental NGOs. Its primary objectives are “the protection of our environmental heritage, the promotion of sustainable development, and the creation of conditions necessary for a lasting peace.” A third is Ossim Shalom—Social Workers for Peace and Social Welfare, a voluntary professional association established by Arab and Jewish social workers in order to promote peace and social welfare in Israel and the neighboring states (Adwan and Bar-On 2000, p. 50). A fourth is the Peres Center for Peace, a non-partisan, non-profit organization founded in 1997 by Shimon Peres “to contribute to peace in the Middle East by building an infrastructure that promotes socio-economic development while advancing cooperation and understanding.” A fifth is the Sabeel Center, a Jerusalem-based institution for “Palestinian liberation theology,” which Reverend Naim Stifan Ateek, an Anglican minister, founded in 1992. It calls for advancing peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis but works primarily on building the political and social consciousness of Palestinian Christians.

Closer to the middle, coming from the hard-line groups, is "Ta'ayush" (Arabic for "life in common"), "a grassroots movement of Arabs and Jews, which was formed in Fall 2002. It works “to break down the walls of racism and segregation by constructing a true Arab-Jewish partnership. A future of equality, justice and peace begins today, between us, through concrete, daily actions of solidarity to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to achieve full civil equality for all Israeli citizens.” Closer to the middle, but originating in the soft-line camp, is Peace Now, Israel’s first mass peace movement. Created in 1978 by 348 reserve officers and soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, it has pressed the Israeli government to seek peace with the Palestinians through negotiations and mutual compromise. Its belief is that “security, human dignity, and a promising future can only come through peace.” Large and consensus-oriented, Peace Now has been reluctant to publicly criticize government policies.
(Svirsky 2001, pp. 323-324). Also closer to the middle is Gush Shalom, a “peacemaker” group. Uri Avnery and others founded it in 1993 to influence Israeli public opinion and lead it toward peace and conciliation with the Palestinian people. Its aims include: ending the occupation; accepting the Palestinian right to self-determination and creation of an independent and sovereign state in all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967; establishing Jerusalem as the capital of the two states, with East Jerusalem (including the Haram al-Sharif) serving as the capital of Palestine and West Jerusalem (including the Western Wall) serving as the capital of Israel; recognizing in principle the Right of Return of the Palestinian refugees, while allowing each refugee to choose freely between compensation and repatriation to Palestine and Israel...; safeguarding the security of both Israel and Palestine by mutual agreement and guarantees; and striving for overall peace between Israel and all Arab countries and the creation of a regional union.

Middle-line Palestinian-Israeli groups include IPCRI, the Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information. A non-governmental, non-profit organization, directed by Israeli Gershon Baskin and Palestinian Hanna Siniora (and during 1990-2004 by Palestinian Zakaria al-Qaq), has worked for years to create a culture of peace. For IPCRI, real peace “can only be made and consolidated by a transformation on the cultural-ideological level, through people-to-people change of heart: from trauma, fear, and anger to healing, forgiveness and reciprocal acceptance” (Gershon & Al-Qaq 1999, p. 3). Among its goals are: starting of a process of reflection in the Israeli and Palestinian societies to see how peace will affect the way each side view itself and the other and the mutual relationship, and fostering among Palestinians and Israelis values and habits of tolerance, listening, empathy, and an openness to reassess one’s own assumptions (Gershon & Al-Qaq 1999, p. 3). Another active middle-line group is PRIME, the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, co-directed by Israeli Dan Bar-On and Palestinian Sarni Adwan. It is a non-governmental, non-profit organization established by Palestinian and Israeli researchers in 1999 with the main goal of pursuing coexistence and peace building through joint research and outreach activities. Its practical objectives include: building an intellectual infrastructure of peace; influencing the public agenda in Israel and Palestine; offering ideas and proposals for overcoming obstacles in peace building; training a new generation of leaders, committed to peaceful coexistence and cooperation; and contributing to the strengthening of civil society. A third middle-line group is MECA, the Middle East Children’s Association, co-directed by Israeli Adina Shapiro and Palestinian Ghassan Abdullah. With its motto of “Education for Peace, Peace through Education,” it enables teachers from both national communities to work jointly on projects, thus transforming attitudes and preparing the youth for tomorrow. Also active in the middle are: the Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Havivá; Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam or Oasis of Peace; OneVoice, “a practical initiative to amplify the voice of moderates and achieve a consensus for conflict resolution among Palestinians and Israelis at the grass roots level;” and the People’s Voice Initiative. Its co-leaders, Palestinian Sari Nusseibeh and Israeli Ami Ayalon, note: [The] initiative is not simply a piece of paper or a set of principles.
It is an instrument of political change. It is based on partnership; on people, not on individual leaders; and on trust building. It is an instrument of hope and clarity: It provides both sides with a vision of a future in which each side can see its respective concerns met, thereby encouraging the two people to act together to bring about change. (Nusseibeh & Ayalon 2004)

Like the aforementioned peacemaking initiatives, the peace building movements may have promoted joint activities and mutual understanding but their differing images of reality, power asymmetries, and expectations have kept their influence limited (Abu-Nimer 1999). Moreover, the focus on the Palestinian side has been on state-building at the expense of non-governmental organizations (Shain and Sussman, 1998, pp. 275-306). In addition, Hassassian (2000, p. 29) observed: “The contribution of Palestinian Third Sector activities to peace-building is minimal and to date is largely insignificant. Most...have a pre-established commitment to the national struggle that supersedes any commitment to what is commonly referred to as the peace process.” On the Israeli side, the diagnosis is similar. As Newman (2001) states:

Until now, Israeli peace movements have concentrated on the pragmatics, rather than the morals, of peace. They have focused on the means to prevent further violence rather than disseminating the message of equality and morality... Even at the height of the peace process, when things were moving ahead in a slow, but positive, way, the focus was on the pragmatics and the technicalities, not the essential morality of ending the Occupation, or of the need to relate to the national “Other” as an equal.

Those that have succeeded in winning some people’s hearts and minds have not prevented the renewal of violence or ended the conflict’s protraction. As Maoz (2004, p. 563) correctly points out “Israeli-Palestinian peace building activities clearly have not achieved their goal. Scores of people-to-people projects were conducted after the signing of the Oslo peace accords in September 1993, but these projects did not seem to prevent the collapse of the peace process and the re-emergence of severe violence between the sides, seven years later, in late September 2000.”

For the first four years of the second Palestinian intifada and the resultant Israeli reaction, it became unwise and even dangerous to promote peace or speak against violence. Some peace building groups, like the Jerusalem Center for Women were “discouraged” not to dialogue with its Bat Shalom, its Jewish counterpart, through the Jerusalem Link, and others even faced harassment from national and governmental forces. In December 2002, for instance, Sari Nusseibeh and Ami Ayalon of the People’s Voice Initiative, came under harassment from both the Palestinian and Israeli authorities. This clearly shows that “neither side is willing to see peace and conflict studies
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uces domestic constraints on positional leaders and governmental strictures on
citizens, and provides support from a larger peace coalition or movement, thus
 guaranteeing legitimacy for peace. It also helps in transforming individuals and
munities, both emotionally and structurally, for social justice. The deeper
people engage in peace actualization, the further they move from the abyss of
dehumanization, victimization, and death and the closer they approach mutual
ception, healing, and hope.

While peacemakers and peace builders follow what Burns (1978, p. 4) calls
actional leadership, one that allows leaders to “approach followers with an eye
echanging one thing for another,” peace actualizers are transforming leaders. In
transforming environment, a leader “looks for potential motives in followers,
ts to justify higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. Hence,
what transforming leadership engenders is “a relationship of mutual stimulation and
elation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral
ents.” It produces also what De Pree (1997, p. 22) calls “movements” that enable
“a collective state of mind, a public and common understanding that the future can
be created, not simply experienced or endured.”

Peace actualizers resolve conflict by advancing “a conflict partnership
pproach,” one that is based on realistic principles of human behavior and
communication. The skills necessary to unblock disagreements include how to:
Recall each party’s hidden perceptions of the conflict; discover the shared needs
of the relationship; focus on a plan for the future rather than blame for the past; and
agree on doables—actions that can be taken immediately and used as stepping-
ones to agreement (Weeks 1992, pp. 63-70). Relationships here rise above the
expedient and the pragmatic and move away from a hard or soft base to a

From Conflict Protraction to Peace Actualization in Palestinian-Israeli Relations

IV. Peace Actualizers for a New Beginning

While the middle-liners in both peacemaking and peace building groups are
en often in the minority or “swimming upstream,” the hard-liners become entrenched
as the vocal majority and the soft-liners turn voiceless as the silent majority.
Overall, the peacemakers’ top-down approach carries some legitimacy but usually
acks sustenance from below. The peace builders’ bottom-up approach embodies
the commitment but lacks the empowerment, the multiple issue orientation, the
financial and organizational stability, and the funding needed for national action,
which is often deficient or dependent on external sources. An integrated
pective is critical for generating common strategies for peace.

Proposed is a theoretical but practically possible, central, safe space where
ough line peacemakers and peace builders can become peace actualizers.
Peace actualizers embody not only the vision and strategy for peace, but also have
direct or indirect positional leadership anchoring and transformational leadership
qualities to make a real difference. They tend to embrace a shared concept of
istory, moderate action, and collaborative work with the other to achieve positive
peace. Having such a space alters attitudes and reshapes values toward conflict
agement and peace, expands positive identifications, enables trust to grow,
uces domestic constraints on positional leaders and governmental strictures on
citizens, and provides support from a larger peace coalition or movement, thus
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Voices for peace actualization are loud and clear. In an international encounter on the Question of Palestine in 1993, participants argued for a culture of peace,

... a comprehensive society-wide system of values, beliefs and attitudes, the interplay and impact of which in and on the civil society would lead citizens of the Middle East—Arabs, Israelis, Palestinians—in their daily lives, on the ground, to put a premium on peace, to desire peace, to seek peace and to stand for peace.18

Participants at another international conference ten years later, titled “Building a Culture of Peace,” organized by the Jewish Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva, under the auspices of UNESCO, passed five resolutions. One called upon the Israeli Government, the Palestinian Authority, and other states to create “Culture of Peace Commissions” in each country. “These commissions will work in coordination to encourage non-violence, cooperation, cross-cultural relations, dialogue as a means of conflict resolution, and humanitarian values.”19

In a new culture of peace, a new peace movement would arise, designed to meet not only the pragmatic aspects of life but their moral dimensions as well. As Newman (2001) explains:

A new peace movement must be one which focuses on the sanctity of human life and the immorality of controlling another nation while at the same time one which can gain mass support for a renewal of the peace process and its implementation on the ground. It must be a movement which expends its energy and resources on education, on reaching children and young adults, on influencing them to believe that peace is not simply a pragmatic objective to be achieved—which it is—but that it is essentially moral and right.

It is here that voices of reason are best heard. It is here that criticism of oneself and the other becomes possible. Isseroff (2003) urges:

We need to hear everyone's voices in support of peace, and in support of the public process for peace, in support of ending the occupation and of ending the violence. No more suicide "martyrs" and no more "resistance" to peace negotiations, no more reprisals, and no more repression. We must not dignify murderers and their supporters as freedom fighters, and we must not excuse property theft, brutality and repression as "self defense.

A difficult task, obviously, is moving toward peace actualization when so many lives and interests are entangled in the web of conflict protraction. While there are no easy answers, the adoption of an idea necessitates “a shift of mind,” one that goes beyond “survival learning” or adaptive learning to emphasize “generative learning” that enhances the capacity to create (Senge, 1990, pp. 13-14). Understanding the process of social transformation clarifies “how the impossible becomes possible” and suggests “how we might best spend our time.”20

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V. Conclusion

A new culture of peace and a new peace movement would shun violence and end dehumanization and repression. It would initiate and sustain education for coexistence, and work to transform the administrative, socio-economic, financial, judicial, legal, and political order to empower people. It would insist on a more equitable distribution of funds, in support of education for peace and transformational leadership, health, economic well-being, and the environment. It would embrace children and empower women and minorities to participate on an equal footing with the rest of society.

However, if peace actualization is to happen in Palestinian-Israeli relations, more peacemakers and peace builders must move to the middle and those in the middle must move to the center of the new peace culture and movement. This means that more peacemakers must become active in peace building and more peace builders must engage in peacemaking. Peace actualization will not be advanced if we continue to wait for peacemakers to become peace builders only after they leave public office or when they near death. Peace builders distancing themselves from public office might maintain their independence from politico-ideological interests and keep them focused on the peace tasks at hand but will not further their cause or create a better future. Moreover, it behooves voters to elect middle-line peacemakers, thus encouraging—and hopefully transforming—hard-liners and soft-liners to move to the middle. It also behooves all of us—individuals, groups, nations, and international order—to support the middle and the center in order to make peace actualization a reality.

Only then can our deeds and narratives be inclusive and meaningful. Only then can Palestinian and Israeli children meet each other anew, as equals, acknowledging their shared vision and mission. Only then can peace with justice for all be possible. Only then can our voice and sentiments mutually reach out and place us at the heart of peace!

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Endnote

The Women in Black group started in Israel but currently has a wide international network. See http://www.womeninblack.net/.

2 For a declaration of Israeli reservists who refuse to serve on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, see http://www.spectacle.org/0302/refuse.html.

3 See http://www.yesh.gvul.org/English/.

4 See http://www.miftah.org/.

5 See http://www.planet.edu/~beitadam.

6 See http://www.foeme.org/.


8 See http://www.sabiel.org/.

9 See http://www.taayush.org.

10 See http://www.peacenow.org.il/.


12 See http://www.ipcri.org/.

13 See http://www.webartery.com/PRIME/.


15 Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam was founded by Bruno Hussar, a Dominican monk, with the intention of creating a safe place where Arabs and Jews would live together despite national and religious differences and would conduct joint educational work for peace. See the village’s web site at http://www.nswas.com/.

16 See http://www.silentno longer.org/.

17 See http://www.mifkad.org.il.


19 This was communicated in a Givat Haviva press release via e-mail on June 2, 2003.

20 Len and Libby Traubman of the Jewish-Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group of San Mateo County in California discussed their peace building work with me and shared their useful brochure, “Building a Common Future, Building Relationship.” For details, see http://traubman.igc.org/global.htm